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USING DIGIDESIGN SESSION 8 FOR MAKING A MUSIC DEMO

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1. INTRODUCTION

This project was carefully planned around one main theme: to make as professional of a recording as possible using the latest digital equipment. This technology is new to SIUC and has become available within the last year due to its affordability. My project has been designed to fully utilize this technology and expand my experience with the Digidesign Session 8 system used here at SIUC.

Digidesign Session 8 is state-of-the-art computer software used for recording digital audio. Session 8 can be loaded onto a common mini-computer and used as a professional eight track recorder. Most of the controls are shown on various window screens and can be manipulated with a mouse and keyboard. The recording quality of the software is currently the best in the recording industry and its price is only two thousand dollars, including external interface. This quality versus price ratio promises to give many musicians more flexibility in making demos and home recordings.

Barry

2. WHY USE DIGITAL RECORDING?

Digital recording has been widely used for over ten years now. Compact disc players made the general public aware of digital recordings largest advantage. This advantage is signal-to-noise ratio. When listening to classical music on vinyl albums, the quiet passages of the music are lost due to noise created by the recording and playback equipment. Initially, analog recordings were first put on compact disc. This eliminated the noise from playback equipment, but only did half of the job. The next logical step was to also record digitally. This effectively eliminated audible noise, but very powerful electronics were required to produce accuracy equivalent to analog. As you might guess, digital recording equipment was expensive. Now, however, professional digital recording equipment prices are dropping due to cheaper, more powerful electronics.

3. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF SESSION 8

Low noise is a major advantage of using Session 8, but it can store, edit and manipulate recorded tracks with greater precision and speed than analog equipment. This allows the user to spend less time with the recording process and more time getting the final sound. Any track can be added, removed or edited without permanent damage to that track. Virtually hundreds of tracks can be stored in one file without deletion. This allows decisions to be made after all the desired tracks have been recorded. Different styles of a piano or guitar part can be recorded separately and then compared using all of the other songs pieces (i.e.; vocals, drums, bass...).

Session 8 uses a thirty-two bit quantizing level. The higher the quantizing level the more accurate the recording. Anything above a thirty-two bit quantizing level is unnoticeable to the human ear. Session 8 uses a two gigabyte hard disk for file storage, thus eliminating tape demagnification problems common to DAT machines and eliminating the high cost of one-time recordable compact discs.

There are some disadvantages to using Session 8 and other forms of digital recording. Recording on analog tape can give a tight compressed sound with deep lows and overall warmth. This coloring effect does not exist in digital recording. What you record is what you get. This harsh sound can be over come through proper use of special equipment and recording techniques. Vacuum tube preamplifiers can be used on instruments to recapture the warmth of analog. Simulated chorus effects can warm-up vocals, as does proper microphone selection.

4. CONCLUSION

Session 8 has top recording quality for an extremely affordable price. Professional sounding demos and home recordings are at your finger tips with this software. Session 8 was designed to bridge the gap between professional recording studios and the semiprofessional musician.

This song was written in memory of Phillip D. Collins who committed suicide in March of 1994. He was my next door neighbor and best friend since grade school. We were dare devils as kids, partiers as teenagers. His nickname was Crash and mine was Bern. We both loved fast cars and loud music. We got in trouble together and laughed together, usually in that order too. This song is somewhat grim as it mourns the loss of our twenty-year friendship. It is something I felt I needed to write to move on with my life.

CRASH N' BERN

a song by Douglas E. Barry

I once had a friend
his name was Crash.
He partied his life into ash.

He consumed every drug
known to man
and spent some time
in the can.

We made a deal
not to get too deep
but he felt he could handle
the stakes so steep.

I begged him to quit
like I did years ago
but his big thick head
wouldn't change no more.

A few months later
he split his brains in two,
thirty years young
and a shock to all his friends.

Why did he do it?
Why did he quit?
Why did he end it all?

When so many people loved him
and would've broken his fall.

Why did he do it?
Why did he quit?
Why did he end it all?

When we were all right there
by his side.

Now I'm left
full of memories
and I'm trying to cope
with life again.

I must admit
I've thought a time before
about splitting my head
right in two.

Should I do it?
Should I quit?
Should I end it all?

When so many people love me
and would break my fall.

Should I do it?
Should I quit?
Should I end it all?

When they are all right there
by my side.

I realize now that
love can bring you through
because nothing is as bad
as it seems to you.

Crash might have crashed
but I'm not gonna burn
because loves my ride
to the very end.

Barry

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